DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 538 CG 014 563

AUTHOR Fine, Michelle
TITLE Options to Injustice: The Battered Woman.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (87th, New York, NY, September 1-5, 1979).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; *Battered Women; *Family Problems; *Individual Power; *Justice; Self Esteem; Social Problems; Spouses; *Violence
IDENTIFIERS *Victims

ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage, societal values, role expectations, the legal system, and sex stereotyping are examples of the multi-level collusion of forces which keep victims of domestic violence from challenging the legitimacy of the abusive behavior. Powerless subjects of injustice, specifically battered women, who are eager to maintain high self-regard may actually identify with the aggressor and develop ways of anesthetizing or avoiding the pain. The physical presence of options or alternatives empowers victims to take charge and activate change in their lives. These alternatives can take the form of personal-, group-, or system-level options, such as psychological exploration of the inner self to make sense of life circumstances, membership in support groups, or legal actions against the aggressor. When victims are offered options, they are told that they are in a position to do something about their victimization. Options do not, by definition, activate a sense of injustice, but they must be present to instigate the process. (Author/HLM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED189538

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Options to Injustice:

The Battered Woman

Michelle Fine

Teachers College,

Columbia University

This paper was presented at the American Psychological Association, New York City, 1979.

CG 014563

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michelle Fine

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Domestic violence represents a well-documented and pervasive characteristic of daily life for many, and deserves study from a social psychological perspective (Gelles, 1972, 1976; Roy, 1977). This context of injustice, injustice in which one individual physically violates the moral dignity and human rights of another, merits investigation for two reasons. The site of domestic violence is both a particularistic example of injustice in that it occurs in the home, between ostensible "loved ones" as well as a generalizable example of injustice because it involves a victimizer and victim, often unequally empowered, engaged in an unjust and frequently continuous relationship. The context of domestic violence allows us to explore: (1) situational characteristics which maintain social injustice--particularly injustice between men and women within a financially and "romantically" dependent relationship; (2) phenomenological characteristics of a sense of injustice; and (3) factors associated with resistance to or rebellion from injustice.

Social injustices abound to the extent that exploitation, dominance and victimization comprise our everyday world. When one individual benefits from the work, pain or terror of another, victimization has occurred. Injustice, however, is a lable applied differentially by observer, victimizer, victim and non-victimized other. To each the same event may or may not be considered an "injustice." (Deutsch, 1974).

What prompts the perception of injustice? In this paper it will be suggested that the presence of options facilitates the recognition of injustice; viable options empower victims to perceive

control over their fates and therefore enable them to recognize injustices.

Social examples of this phenomenon are plentiful. Battered women who learn about available shelters may only then come to experience the abuse as unjust. Ill-treated workers may understand the injustice of labor relations only after they become familiar with the notions of unionization. Draft eligible men ignorant of options may have perceived the Vietnam War as legitimate; draft eligible men, knowledgeable of options to the draft, may have seen the war as illegitimate. The non-inevitability of injustice may be apparent only when options are available (Moore, 1978).

The nature of injustice

An injustice prevails when a mutual understanding is dishonored,a binding moral contract broken, explicit expectations left unfulfilled. These circumstances comprise the objective criteria of injustice. Such evidence, however, may be insufficient for an involved participant to consider the situation unjust (Deutsch, 1974; Moore, 1978). Whether or not an individual experiences a subjective sense of injustice is influenced by the role of the individual as well as the structural characteristics of the situation. Victims, victimizers, non-victimized members and observers develop and apply distinct "sensitivity thresholds" for assessing "objectively" unjust circumstances (Deutsch, 1974). An injustice to a victim may be a necessary evil to an observer or a routine procedure for a victimizer. The fact that a set of circumstances satisfies the objective criteria of injustice is but the first step in classifying a relationship or system as unjust (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cahn, 1949). The subjective experience of

injustice is determined by a multiplicity of individual and situational factors.

Participants

Injustices, in general, involve a variety of participants. Primarily, there is the victimizer, the victim, non-victimized others and remote observers. The victimizer is the individual who executes the injustice; the perpetrator of the moral violation. The victim is, of course, the individual who suffers most severely and directly from the act of injustice. The non-victimized others are those individuals involved in the system but exempt from the injustice; those individuals who witness but do not suffer, directly, fromthe pains of the injustice. Observers include people who are privy to information about the injustice and may opt to acknowledge or ignore the event. Observers have the luxury of non-involvement, if they so choose.

Domestic violence is an injustice in which the entire family system, comprised of victimizer, victim and multiple "non-victimized others" all suffer as a system. No one in the family merely observes unaffected; none is excluded from the pains of the violence. Child abuse episodes frequently are coupled with acts of wife abuse (Gayford, 1975; Roy, 1977). Even when this is not the case, children who are spared the physical brutality witness the suffering and experience both vicariously and personally the terror of the battered parent. As well, the children are affected over time. Children of domestically violent parents frequently model such behaviors in their own interactions as adults (Prescott & Letko, 1977; Varma, 1977).

The participants in this injustice are numerous. Each has a distinct involvement, a distinct investment in maintaining the family system (Sprey, 1971) and therefore a distinct perspective from which to view the experience. Each has, as well, a distinct set of options available to her or him to be utilized in remedying, buffering or resisting the injustice.

Perception of injustice

The question of concern to us, however, is under what conditions do victims and non-victimized others experience a sense of injustice? When do victims recognize the non-inevitability of their abuse (Moore, 1978)? What are the consequences of this perception?

In order to understand, more fully, the nature of awakening a sense of injustice, it is important to understand those structural characteristics which maintain a system of injustice. How do victimizers create environments which perpetrate and institutionalize injustices; and how do victims create environments in which they can blind themselves from the perception of the injustice?

Maintaining the unjust system

In general, four structural conditions characterize a site of injustice: a closed system, social divisions, role constriction and ideology. These four conditions are generally established by victimizers, although frequently enforced by victims and non-victimized members.

A closed system is one in which there is minimal influence from the outside, extreme isolation and frequently low tolerance for deviance (Lifton ,1971). Although not all closed systems are totalitarian or inherently unjust, social injustices are often well-shadowed within boundaries designed to exclude outside infor-

mation about social alternatives. With limited knowledge of alternatives, or access to options, individuals subject to totalistic methods frequently concede to the orientation of the authorities (Milgram, 1974; Moore, 1978).

Unjust systems are similarly characterized by social divisions which buttress the authority system and mitigate against the possibility of collective or individual outrage. The divide and conquer strategy is particularly effective when victims are threatened with punishment should they organize or betray those in power. Such threats create atmospheres of internal vigilance, which erode trust and social support, heighten internal hostility and instigate social divisions (Deutsch,1973).

A third structural characteristic which reduces the probability of perceived social injustice is role constriction; victims of injustice are frequently constrained, behaviorally, and lmiited in access to social identities. For example, African slaves sent to Latin America were sanctioned to practice a variety of identities in addition to the "slave role" and were more likely to rebel and participate in riots than were their role constrained U.S. counterparts (Elkins, 1968). Denied the opportunity to step outside the slave role, the U.S. slaves were less able to view their injustice in a detached manner, and consequently less likely to challenge its legitimacy.

Finally, ideology or the routinized advocacy of an oppressive ideology, typifies effective unjust systems. Victimizers, invested in maintaining and justifying the existing system, actively prosyletize system ideology -- the philosophy on which the system rests and is supported. Although all social systems engage in some socialization processes during which members are introduced to

system ideology and structure (Ferree & Miller, 1978), in sites of injustice, individuals are pressured to accept and reinforced for embracing this ideology; punished for dissent.

False consciousness is accomplished when victims are convinced and ultimately supportive of the morality and validity of the oppressive ideology, even when the ideology holds the victims responsible for their own impoverished circumstances (Gable, 1975; Marx, 1904). Successfully implanted, false consciousness cultivates victims who nurture self-hatred, believe in and reinforce the legitimacy of the oppressive system.

What's unjust about domestic violence?

It is difficult to limits one's determination, in the case of domestic violence, of exactly who is the victimizer and who is the victim. In some respects, we are all victims of a culture of violence; a culture comprised of persons and institutions which condone violence, violence to women in particular (Straus, 1976). What is unjust about domestic violence is a culture that permits, if not encourages violence; a society of medical, legal and social institutions that are unresponsive to the victims of domestic violence (Field & Field, 1973; Martin, 1976); and family structures in which the financial and psychological dependence of the woman on her husband creates a domestic cage for victims of violence (Frieze, 1978; Gelles, 1976).

The homes in which domestic violence occurs typify many of the characteristics of unjust systems. Women in abusive marriages explain that they are often told to stay home, not to leave the house and not to discuss the violence with others: consequently the closed system.

In some respects similar to the role constriction of the

U.S. slave, victims of domestic violence are often punished as they embark on person-role changes. Being role constricted limits the latitude of the wife, while maintaining the legitimate power of the husband as bread winner and contact with the outside world. Battered women report frequently that the domestic violence began at the point of a role transition: pursuit of education, job hunting or becoming pregnant (Prescott & Letko, 1977; Roy, 1977). These are all events in which the woman changes her status vis a vis the man; the shifts in role may instigate violence.

Ideology, on numerous levels, is an active component in perpetuating domestic violence. The "homogenized American woman" is one well imbued with false consciousness and ideology about what it means to be a woman, and how the woman is responsible for holding the family system together, despite adversity (Bem, 1975). Such ideology is not limited to women's conceptions of gender roles, however. Social attitudes reflect male acceptance of a moderate level of violence between spouses. In a survey of social attitudes to violence, Stark and McEnvoy found that 25% of the men, and 1/6 of the women in the sample consider "slapping one's spouse under certain circumstances" to be appropriate (Stark & McEnvoy, 1970; Shotland & Shaw, 1976).

Given these characteristics of the culture, society and homes in which domestic violence occurs, it is clear that there is a multi-level collusion of forces which keeps victims of domestic violence from challenging the legitimacy of the abusive behavior. However, how do the victims, themselves, deal with the objectively apparent (or not so apparent) injustice? "Why does the woman stay?" The next section explores the mechanisms developed to stay in the abusive relationship while perceiving it as just or at least tolerable.

Silencing the screams of injustice:
The role of the victim

When unjust systems obstruct alternative philosophies, ban routes to change and publicize severe penalities for resistance, victims are limited in available options. Powerless subjects of injustice who are eager to maintain high self regard may identify with aggressors(Deutsch,1974). Such identification is evidenced by "buying into the system" and embracing its assumptions and rules. Identification may be active--the individual who promotes system goals-- or passive -- accepting the system "as is" . This is not to say that powerless victims enjoy or opt to participate in their oppression but rather to say that when hopeless and optionless, they develop innovative ways of anasthetizing or avoiding the pain.

To self-anasthetize, some accept today's pain for tomorrow's pleasure (Freud,1927,1930). Use of hallucinatory drugs or magical curessoothe injustice, evidenced by rituals of the peyote cult of the Navaho tribe(Aberle,1966). Other anasthetizing processes include Messianic religion(Kaufmann,1973);allying with the authority (Dahrendorf,1969;Deutsch,1974;Festinger,1957);estal lishing a personal ideology compatible with the existing ideology(Bakke,1940;Kaufmann, 1973;Moore,1978;Riesman,1949); psychologically reducing dissonance (Cooper&Brehm,1971;Festinger,1957);compartmentalizing moral behaviors judgments and principles (Riesman,1949;Tillich,1954) and altering latitudes of moral rejection and acceptance (Sherif & Hovland,1961). These strategies camouflage social injustice,change the rules to avoid confrontation with the authorities,and/or detour the potential for moral outrage.

Identification with the aggressor. To identify with the aggressor is to accept and defend actively the authority system responsible for executing the perceived injustice. Victims who

identify with the aggressor ally themselves with the power system, practice approved behaviors, accept the norms, expedite the ends and legitimate the goals of the victimizer group (Deutsch,1974; Freud,1927;Moore,1970). These individuals are willing, in Fromm's framework,to sacrifice their individuality and symbiotically fuse with another to acquire strength and/or power. These 'secondary bonds' create a popular and destructive 'escape from freedom.'

Historical and laboratory evidence indicates that powerless individuals frequently identify with and execute the ideas and orders of those in charge(Milgram,1963,1974;Orne,1962). Moore provides evidence of concentration camp victims clothing themselves as SS men, adopting the violent tactics of their imprisoners and mimicking the fascist rheotoric of their oppressors (see also Bettleheim,1960; Elkins,1968). Although some actively identify (SS men replicas) while others passively accept and resign themselves to the inevitability of the injustice(Moore,1978), both groups legitimate the existing system and reinforce its distribution of power.

Intra-psychic methods. Intra-psychic defense mechanisms shadow social injustice by manipulating or dismissing threatening pieces of information. Repression, a common response to injustice (Freud, 1927; Moore,1978; Tillich,1954) aids individuals in curbing desires, goals and expectations so that they are not discordant with the unjust reality. Through repression, individuals reduce the gap between expectations and realities by modifying the former to conform to the latter.

Cognitive methods. Equity research provides evidence of alternative methods to mute cognitively the perception of injustice (Adams,1973;Austin,1977;Homans,1961,1974;Walster,Berscheid & Walster,1973). Individuals engaged in inequitable relationships, in which the outcome/input ratios are unequal, experience negative emotions, such as anger or guilt, and are motivated subsequently to restore equity (Austin,1977). To restore equity, one can modify the inputs and/or outcomes of the individuals involved, compensate or derogate the victim (Ryan,1971; Walster,Berscheid & Walster,1973). In either case, particularly the latter, the chances for moral outrage are slim.

Yet another strategy for cognitively masking an injustice involves resetting comparison levels for one's self to the extent that the felt injustice disappears (Festinger, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). According to Thibaut and Kelley's comparison level theory, individuals engineer relationships, particularly involuntary relationships, so that the perceived benefit-cost ratio falls on the side of profit. Individuals derive comparison levels for alternatives (CLalt), standards used to determine the minimum outcome level for remaining in a relationship. For a relationship to survive, those involved must reap benefits that surpass their CLalt.

Individuals frustrated by relationships that do not satisfy their sense of entitlement may lower their CLalt and devalue unavailable outcomes, rather than challenge the source of the frustration. A lowered CLalt is another mechanism for denying the presence of injustice. A lowered CLalt allows individuals to maintain frustrating relationships, or unjust relationships, while they consider the relationships to be above minimum standards. This cognitive mechanism permits individuals to remain in familiar, if unjust, relationships and maintain the sense of being advantaged.

Advantageous comparisons, comparisons which result in an advantaged-appearing victim, are created by victims anxious to deny the presence of injustice and to maintain positive self regard (Austin,1977). Such comparisons obviously reduce the chance for a sense of injustice.

The sense of injustice

Although objective evidence of injustice is bountiful, the sense of injustice, the experience of moral violation, is substantially less visible. In much the way that a trees falls silently if no one is in the forest, so too does an injustice fall without responsive outrage if no one is able to experience the "sense of injustice" (Cahn,1949; Deutsch,1974). A comprehensive examination of the literature suggests that a sense of injustice includes four basic components: perceptual, cognitive, affective and behavioral Individuals experiencing a sense of injustice may:

(a) recognize new life alternatives as available and viable

(b) have open minds and collect information about life alternatives

(c) feel morally violated and acknowledge moral outrage

(d) enact behaviors to challenge or flee from the existing system, or create an alternative system.

Although this model of a sense of injustice accounts for four co-existing components of injustice, the four need not happen concurrently. In fact, the four need not happen at all. One might experience an injustice perceptually, cognitively, and affectively with no behavioral change. An individual may feel outraged but unwilling to change her/his situation should the costs of change outweigh the benefits (Thibaut & Kelley,1959). When the penalties of change or attempted change are so great as to inhibit the sense of injustice, the victims often accept their situations despite the injustice .

Conditions for deanasthetizing and activating a sense of injustice: Options

Numerous explanations have been offered to determine when individuals experience a sense of injustice. It appears, though, that none of these approaches is sufficient to explain how individuals come to view and experience injustices imposed on them. When do individuals stop shifting their expectancies so that they align with unjust allocations (Gurr,1970;Thibaut & Kelley,1959) ? When do individuals ripen themselves to be empowered, psychologically, to respond to injustice? When do individuals recognize the utility of social and political resources in combatting injustice (Ferre & Miller, 1978)?

The presence of options, a structural characteristic which provides victims alternative routes to similar or new ends, may be hypothesized as the variable which distinguishes situations in which an injustice response is system-challenging rather than system-legitimating. Although the physical presence of options does not guarantee the perception, or psychological recognition of options, the physical is necessary for the latter to emerge. Options provide victims with pathways to consider, pursue and choose alternatives. Unless individuals perceive alternatives, other modes of living, as well as options to reach these alternatives, they can not and will not permit themselves to experience the injustice to which they must succumb. In optionless situations, individuals may well:

(a) not perceive the injustice
(b) identify with the authority and/or
(c) act to fortify existing ideology and structure.

Exposure to alternatives, and then options for realizing the alternatives, empowers victims with the opportunity to imagine themselves outside the limiting situation, looking in. The 'outsider' view precipitates a detached perspective in which the dynamics of, and collusions in, the injustice are clearer. These removed individuals enjoy an extended focus, an enlarged world view of possibilities and the freedom to perceive and choose against remaining in the unjust environment. Individuals denied feasible options are powerless. In order to retain high self regard, and in order to see themselves as relatively "in control," they blind themselves to the injustice; they use mechanisms to silence their own screams.

Options

The essential question, determining whether an individual will perceive an injustice, asks, "If I change my perception and conceptualization of myself and my surroundings, if I recognize the injustice and experience moral outrage, have I alternatives available to the injustice?"

An affirmative answer to this question typifies an impending sense of injustice. A negative response will come from an individual who is powerless and accepts, submits and/or reinforces the injustice-producing system through active participation in or passive acceptance of his/her own victimization (Deutsch, 1974; Fromm, 1941).

Options are alternative pathways made available to and viable for individuals caught in unjust situations. For our purposes, options are externally available routes to change. This model does not address psychological options which individuals create to make sense of injustice; or existential options, such as the decision of suicide; it stresses external options which empower victims to the extent that they have the potential to take charge and activate change in their lives. This change does not necessarily guarantee a better or improved situation, but rather the opportunity for change makes apparent the non-inevitability of the injustice. The presence of the option suggests that this particular injustice need not be the fate of the individual.

Options vary along the dimension of potential power to induce change. Options may in fact be viable routes for exercising change in one's life; they may, however, represent lame, cosmetic illusions of such power. For example, the option to appeal a seemingly unjust decision to a stacked committee is a corrupt, rather than viable option. The extent to which an option can legitimately and meaningfully induce change is considered its potential power. Options differ, largely, along this dimension. Individuals experiencing a sense of injustice, who naively pursue a corrupt option, become embittered, frustrated and may retreat to reticence and acceptance of the injustice (Fromm,1941).

Options can take the form of personal, group or system level options. An individual can pursue a route to change which benefits her/him personally, to the exclusion of other victims or individuals involved in the injustice. A person may select a group option,

which, with some sacrifice by all, benefits a group of people caught in the unjust situation. Finally, a person may engage in a system-wide option, a coup d'etat, for example, resulting in radical disruption of the entire system.

The social psychology of options

How do options operate as catalysts to a sense of injustice? The presence of externally available routes to change permits members of an unjust system the opportunity to transcend, psychologically, the boundaries of the system. That is, options facilitate a psychological journey beyond the limiting situation; this opportunity to be on the outside is, concurrently, an opportunity to look in, to reflect on the dynamics of the injustice. As an outsider afforded a detached view, an individual can see, better, the investment of the victim, victimizer and non-victimized members in maintaining the injustice.

What is the psychological mediator that allows individuals to vascillate perspectives from insider to outsider looking in? The psychological power to change, to create movement inone's life, is generated by the presence of options. People strive to make sense of their life circumstances. This process often involves individuals deciding that they have control in determining their fates (Lerner, Miller & Holmes,1976); even in controlling injustices that occur. Victims of random atrocities such as rape and traumatic accidents, fare best when they take responsbility, psychologically, for their victimization (Bulman & Wortman,1977). Victims psychologically empower themselves to the extent that they believe even random acts of violence can be controlled. If it can be assumed that individuals attribute reason and control to life events, particularly with respect to victimization, we can postulate that under

conditions in which no control or mechanism for change is possible, or likely, that individuals deny the injustice or transform it into deservingness (Lerner, Miller & Holmes,1976). Consequently, victims with no options camouflage their injustices; in fact, they probably actively deny the presence of injustice.

Alternatively, victims empowered with options are provided a mechanism of power to change. The option allows them to look out expansively and look in critically, while attaining a clearer vision of 'reality.' The presence of an option presents the opportunity for people to see themselves as active participants in their oppression as well as potentially active participants in their own 'liberation.' The presence of options throws the responsibility for change, at least partially, back into the hands of the victim. Options force victims to decide between silencing their own screams and creating alternative existences for themselves.

Options, then, are likely to be arousing for victims. When victims are offered options, they are told, in effect, that they are in a position to do something about their victimization. Not all victims will embrace an option and create change. Many will dismiss the option as non-viable and/or deny the injustice. Others will use the opportunity to be morally righteous, and remain in the unjust situation (Deutsch,1978). Options, do not, by definition activate a sense of injustice, but they must be present to instigate the process.

Options and domestic violence

The dynamics of injustice and the role of options in instigating a sense of injustice are well illustrated in the case of the battered woman. It has been demonstrated that women most likely to leave their abusive husbands are those with the most resources, such as job skills, money, social support and those least likely to have been exposed to domestic violence as children (Gelles, 1972, 1976). The women most able to resist actively their victimization are those with greatest options and those who have been exposed to alternative, in this case, non-violent, domestic contexts.

What about those individuals who suffer from domestic violence but do not identify themselves as victims of injustice? A preliminary piece of data suggests that to make sense of the injustice, such individuals conceptualize a world composed of similarly treated individuals; they define domestic violence as normative.

This research, conducted by Blackman & Fine (1978) involved 52 dental students, men and women aged 23 to 28, surveyed about their experiences with domestic violence. Of this group, approximately 25 percent indicated that they had been exposed to or participated in acts of domestic violence. These individuals, in response to the question "Of 1,000 American couples, how many do you suppose engage in domestic violence?" were most likely to offer inflated responses (750-900) whereas individuals with no experience with domestic violence estimated more accurately (250-300). Those individuals exposed to domestic violence assume it to be typical.

How can these victims be awakened? How can their projections be corrected? One method, as proposed throughout this paper, is to expose victims to alternatives, and provide options or routes, to achieving these alternatives.

Offering alternatives is not a panacea, however. Victims may be resistant to options. As well, and more important, not all options are feasible, even for individuals exposed to the drama and terror of violence in their own homes. Some social programs offered ostensibly as options are more destructive or demoralizing than even no options at all. In fact, many social options have so little potential power that they actually reinforce the social problems they were intended to remedy. The scarceness and impotence of many options suggests to victims that these alternatives are not very realistic. For example, many battered women shelters are constrained by long waiting lists and financial pressures limiting women's length of residence (Burdick, 1978). A brief residence period is potentially a damaging option; it is generally too brief for an abused woman to reintegrate herself psychologically, socially or professionally; to find a place to live, a job, or to make provisions for her children. After this time these women may feel defeated, convinced that they can't make it on their own and that they do, indeed, need their husbands to survive. Returning to the site of abuse, as over 50 percent of the women do, reinforces the woman's sense of dependence and the husband's sense of power (Gayford, 1975). Options that are not viable or effective, or are too costly, may frustrate a sense of injustice.

Options need to be available and viable to stimulate a sense of injustice and induce the decision to flee or rebel. Victims who challenge injustice will be demoralized in defeat if they risk flight or fight, and the option is lame. Learned helplessness (Maier & Seligman, 1976; Seligman, 1975) may be cultivated, encouraging acceptance and reinforcement of unjust surroundings. Impotent options are catalysts to further injustice.

Policy

What kinds of policy recommendations can be derived from these theoretical notions about options to injustice? First, it is important for us to recognize the limited value of needs assessments in determining the "needs" of the battered population. With a limited view of what options are available, and "battered" aspirations for what is attainable, the responses to a needs assessment would be muted by the hopeless reality perceived by many victims of domestic violence. Instead, we have to move toward a policy of creative social experimentation in which a diversity of programs are offered and tested, on varying populations.

Second, we must de-mythologize the battered population and recognize the multiplicity of needs inherent in this diversified population. Domestic violence is not a discriminating activity; it occurs across class and across racial lines (Straus, 1977). The needs of victims vary and can not be responded to with monolithic policy. The women themselves must be engaged in formulating policy and social programs designed to aid the victims.

Third, domestic violence must be viewed as a systemic injustice. The systems involved include our culture, social institutions as well as the traditional nuclear family system. Society, as a whole, is responsible for the injustice in many ways. First, the ideology of what is "feminine" and what is "masculine" suggests the submission of women and physical aggression of men (Bem, 1975). Second, economic conditions coupled with employment discrimination result in many women who are financially dependent, and eventually psychologically dependent, on their husbands, and therefore can not afford to leave them. Such uncontested dependence may make these women unable to perceive the injustice of their circumstances. Victims have to be provided viable options, that is sufficient social services such as economic subsidies, vocational training, long term shelters in order for domestic violence to become a public issue confronted by victims and victim-advocates.

The second system in which the blame for the injustice falls is, of course, the family. The extended as well as the nuclear family contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence. Battered women who turn to their parents are often shunned, or told "He is good to you; he feeds you and the children. Don't make trouble."* Such a lack of support mitigates against a rising perception of injustice. Families train their offspring in violence as a normative mode of interaction, e.g. spanking, and the offspring, in obedient style, model such behaviors as appropriate modes of adult interaction (Chapman & Gates, 1979; Straus, 1979). People have to be trained early on about alternative modes of communication and expression; we have to de-legitimate the use of violence in our homes for the purposes of discipline or control.

*Personal communication with women at a battered women's shelter in New Jersey.

A final policy consideration: social scientists and deliverers of social services often come equipped with "social programs" designed to aid needy victims. We assume that our programs are appropriate and that victim unwillingness to accept help is a signal of hostility or resistance. We have to recognize that our approaches may be entirely inappropriate; poorly matched to the needs of the client and/or ill-timed. It is primarily important to understand that the psychological process of leaving the violent home is a difficult one; one that takes time, if made. Expediting the decision to leave may only cause the woman to leave and then change her mind; ambivalence traditionally results in an ultimate return to the site of violence (Giles-Sims,1978). When a woman has been abused she may only be ready to accept cognitively the fact that she has been treated unfairly, she may not be ready to leave her home. Although we, as social scientists and deliverers of social services, may be tempted to encourage flight from the home, if we are too forceful we may make the woman engage in activities which are at variance with her wishes, and instigate only more trouble. With good intentions understood, we must respect the wishes and work with the resources of the victim, or else our ostensible help will be nothing but aggravation to an already desperate situation.

This consideration concerns the influence, intentional or not, of our political or personal assumptions as they color our policy decisions. It is important to listen to the needs of the client without determining, a priori, the needs of the client. In much the way that expediting the "flight" of the battered woman can be premature, instigating reconciliation can be naive and dangerous.

It is frequently the case that domestic violence is a one-time event; it is also true, however, that the first time is often not the last time. To encourage a woman to stay with her husband, to maintain the nuclear family can be a mistake. Our policy decisions should come from the needs of the victim, not from the most accessible social program, our personal or political orientations or our interpretations of what the woman "really wants."

References

Aberle, D. The peyote religion among the Navaho. Chicago:Aldine Publishing, 1966.

Adams, J.S. Toward an understanding of inequity. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1963, 67, 5, 422-436.

Adams, J.S. Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed) Advances in experimental social psychology, 2. New York: Academic Press, 1965, 267-299.

Aldridge, J. After the lost generation. In M. Plesur (Ed) Intellectual alienation in the 1920s. Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath & Company, 1970, 37-45.

Asch, S. Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. In Guetzkow, H. (Ed) Groups, leadership and men. Pittsburgh:Carnegie Press, 1951, 177-190.

Austin, W. Equity theory and social comparison processes. In Suls, J. and Miller, R. Social comparison processes. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corp.,1977,279-306.

Bakke, E. Citizens without work: A study of the effects of unemployment upon the workers' social relations and practices. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Bateson, G. Steps to an ecology of the mind. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1972.

Becker, H. Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance. New York: Free Press, 1963.

Bem, D. Self-perception: An alternative interpretation of cognitive dissonance phenomena. Psychological Review,1967,74, 183-200.

Bem, D. Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed) Advances in experimental social psychology. Vol. 6 New York: Academic Press, 1972.

Bem, S. & Bem, D. Homogenizing the American woman: The power of an unconscious ideology. In Krupat, E. Psychology is social. Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1977.

Bernstein, M. & Crosby, F. Relative deprivation: Testing the models. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada, 1978.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. The social construction of reality. New York: Anchor Books, 1966.

Berscheid, E. & Walster, E. When does a harmdoer compensate a victim? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1967, 6, 435-441.

Bettleheim, B. The informed heart: Autonomy in a mass age.Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960.

Blackman, J. & Fine, M. Preliminary research on public attitudes toward domestic violence.1978.

Cahn, E. The sense of injustice. New York: Midland Book, 1949.

Cahn, E. Justice. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968, 8, 341-347.

Camus, A. The rebel: An essay on man in revolt. New York:Vintage,1956.

Cantril, H. Psychology of social movements. New York:John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. 1941.

Chapman, J. & Gates, M. (Eds) The victimization of women. Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, 1978.

Cooper, J. & Brehm, J. Prechoice awareness of relative deprivation as a determinant of cognitive dissonance. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 1971, 7, 571-581

Coser, L. Social conflict and the theory of social change. British Journal of Sociology, 1957, 8.

Crosby, F. A model of egoistical relative deprivation, Psychological Review, 1976, 83, 2, 85-113.

Davies, J. Toward a theory of revolution. American Sociological Review. 1962, 27, 5-19.

Davis, J. A formal interpretation of the theory of relative deprivation. Sociometry. 1959, 22, 280-296.

Davis, K. & Jones, E. Changes in interpersonal perception as a means of reducing cognitive dissonance. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology. 1960, 61, 402-410.

Deutsch, M. Awakening the sense of injustice. In M. Ross and M. Lerner (Eds) The Quest for Justice. Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974.

Diener, C. & Dweck, C. An analysis oflearned helplessness: Continuous changes in performance strategy and achievement cognitions following failure. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1978, 36, 5, 451-462.

Dollard, J., Miller, N., Doob, L., Mowrer, O. & Sears, R. Frustration and aggression. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.

Elkins, S. Slavery: A problem in American institutional and intellectual life. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1968.

Ferree, M. & Miller, F. Winning hearts and minds: Some social psychological contributions to the resource mobilization perspective on social movements. Unpublished manuscript, New York University.

Festinger, L. A theory o social comparison processes. Human Relations, 1954, 7, 117-140.

Festinger, L. A theory of cognitive dissonance. Stanford:Stanford University Press, 1957.

Field, M. & Field, H. Marital violence and the criminal process: Neither justice nor peace. Social Service Review, 1973, 47, 221-240.

Freire, P. Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York:Seabury Press,1968.

Freud, S. The ego and the id. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1923.

Freud, S. Future of an illusion. London: Standard Edition,1927.

Freud, S. Civilization and its discontents. London: Hogarth Press, 1930.

Frieze, I. Social psychological theory and problems of wife battering. In press: Victimology, 1979.

Fromm, E. Marx's concept of man. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1961.

Gabel, J. False consciousness. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

Gamson, W.A. Power and discontent. Homewood Illinois:Dorsey,1968.

Gayford, J.J. Wife battering: A preliminary survey of 100 cases. British Medical Journal, 1975, 25, 1, 194-197.

Gelles, R. The violent home: A study of physical aggression between husbands and wives. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1972.

Gelles, R. Abused wives: Why do they stay? Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1976, 38, 4, 659-668.

Gerth, H. & Mills, C. W. (Ed) From MaxWeber:Essays in Sociology. New York:Oxford University Press, 1946.

Giles-Sims, J. A system's theory analysis of the histories of battered women: Stages in the escape route. 1978

Grofman, B. & Muller, E. The strange case of relative gratification and potential for political violence:The V-curve hypothesis. American Political Science Review, 1973, 67, 514-539 .

Gurr, T. Why men rebel. Princeton: Princeton University Press,1971.

Hampden-Turner, C. Radical man. New York:Anchor Books, 1971.

Hawthorne, N. (1850) The scarlet letter. New York:New American library, 1959.

Homans, G. The human group. New York:Harcourt, Brace & World,1950.

Homans, G. Social behavior: Its elementary forms. New York:Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961, 1974.

Janis, I. Victims of groupthink. Boston:Houghton-Mifflin,1972.

Janis, I. & Manne, L. Decision Making. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1977.

Kaplan, M. Alienation and identification. New Yor :Free Press,1976.

Kaufmann, W. Without guilt and justice. New York:Peter Wyden,Inc. 1973.

Koestler, A. Darkness at noon. Middlesex, England:Penguin Books, 1940.

Kohlberg, L. Moral development. In International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Kohlberg, L. Stage and sequence: The cognitive developmental approach to socialization. In D. Goslin (Ed) Handbook of socialization theory and research. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company,1969.

Kuhn, T. The structure of scientific revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1970.

Langer, J. Theories of development. New York:Holt,Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Lerner, M. The desire for justice and reactions to victims. In J. Macaulay & L. Berkowitz (Eds) Altruism and helping behavior. New York: Academic Press, 1970, 205-229.

Lerner, M., Miller, D. & Holmes, J. Deserving and the emergence of forms of justice. In Berkowitz, L. and Walster, E. (Eds) Advances in experimental social psychology (V.9),New York: Academic Press, 1976, 133-162.

Roy, M. A current survey of 150 cases. In Roy, M. Battered Women. New York: Reinhold Corp, 1977. 25-44.

Runciman, W. relative deprivation and social justice. Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1966.

Ryan, W. Blaming the victim. New York: Vintage, 1971.

Schutz, A. The stranger: An essay in social psychology. In Schutz, A Collected papers, Studies in social theory (II). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, 91-105.

Schutz, A. The problem of social reality. In Schutz, A. Collected papers, I. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.

Seligman, M. Helplessness. San Francisco: Freeman, 1975.

Sexton, A. Transformations. Boston:Houghton-Mifflin Company,1971.

Shaffer, L. & Shoben, E. The psychology of adjustment. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956.

Sherif, M. & Hovland, C. Social judgment. New Haven:Yale University Press, 1961.

Shotland, R. & Straw, M. Bystander response to assault: When a man attacks a woman. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Nov. 1976, 34, #5, 990-1000.

Smith, E. & Kluegel, J. Sources of beliefs about social inequality: Self-interest, experience and ideology. Paper presented at American Psychological Association, 1978.

Sprey, I. On the management of conflict of families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1971, 33, 722-731.

Stark, M. & McEnvoy, J. Middle class violence. Psychology Today, (Nov) 1970, 52-54, 110-112.

Steil, J. Tuchman, B. & Deutsch, M. An exploratory study of the meanings of injustice and frustration. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 1978, 4, 3, 393-398.

Steinbruner, J. The cybernetic theory of decision. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Thibaut, J. & Kelley, H. The social psychology of groups. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1959.

Tillich, P. Love, power and justice. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Turiel, E. Stage transition in moral development. In R.M. Travers (Ed) Second handbook of research on teaching. Chicago:Rand McNally, Co. 1973.

Turiel, E. Conflict and transition in moral development. Child Development, 1974, 45, 14-29.

Varma, M. Battered women: Battered children. In Roy, M. Battered women. New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold Corp, 1977, 263-276.